

Message Text

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15

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02

LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 DODE-00 PA-03 USIA-12 PRS-01

INT-08 RSR-01 /117 W

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R 080530 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6515

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 1014

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, SU

SUBJECT: SCHEDULED MAY DAY RALLY FIZZLES

1. SUMMARY: FAILURE OF MAY DAY LABOR RALLY IN KHARTOUM HIGHLIGHTS GOS INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT RELATIONS WITH ORGANIZED LABOR. UNION LEADERSHIP'S NEGLECT OR INABILITY ORGANIZE IMPRESSIVE CROWD WHICH PRESIDENT NIMAIRI PUBLICLY SCHEDULED ADDRESS EMBARRASSED REGIME AND EMPHASIZES UNION DISSATISFACTION WITH GOS UNION POLICY AND ECONOMIC ISSUES, NOTABLY INFLATION AND SCARCITY CONSUMER GOODS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE RALLY. DISAPPOINTINGLY SMALL TURNOUT FOR MAY 1 LABOR RALLY IN KHARTOUM CAUSED PRES. NIMAIRI CANCEL SCHEDULED SPEECH REPORTEDLY IN SOME ANGER AND AFTER ARRIVAL AT SITE. AL- AYAAM EDITORIAL MAY 3 FAULTS UNION LEADERSHIP FOR FAILING TO ORGANIZE LARGE RALLY THOUGH EDITOR DID NOT ATTEMPT ASSESS MOTIVES. REPORTEDLY A SECOND ATTEMPT TO HOLD THE RALLY IN EVENING ALSO FAILED. IT IS ALSO SIGNIFICANT THAT NO LABOR RALLY TOOK PLACE IN ATBARA, HQ OF SUDAN RAILWAYS AND CENTER OF THE LARGEST UNION.

3. UNION DISCONTENT. MAY DAY EVENTS FOLLOW RUMORS WORK SLOWDOWN BY RAILWAY EMPLOYEES AT PORT SUDAN (REPORTED INTERMITTENTLY SINCE JANUARY) AT FIRST OSTENSIBLY IN PROTEST GOS ARREST 3
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LABOR LEADERS (JUST RELEASED) IN CONNECTION SHANAAN PLOT AS WELL AS PROTEST AGAINST PROSECUTION TRAIN ENGINEER INVOLVED IN PEDESTRIAN- TRAIN MISHAP.

4. THESE INCIDENTS ALSO SEEM TO INDICATE HEATING UP OF STRUGGLE BETWEEN SOME UNIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT OVER PROPOSED FEDERATION OF SUDANESE WORKERS TRADE UNIONS (FSWTC). ORIGINALLY PLANNED TO BE FORMED BY FEB 1972 IT IS STILL ONLY IN PROVISIONAL STAGE. HEAD OF SUDAN RAILWAYS WORKERS UNION, MUSA AHMED MITAY, THUS FAR HAS REFUSED TO SERVE ON FEDERATION' S SECRETARIAT. AS LEADER LARGEST UNION, HE LIKELY WOULD BE MADE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION AND HIS REFUSAL TO SERVE CREATES SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR PROPOSED FEDERATION. OPPOSITION OF RAILWAYS UNION PROBABLY ALSO STEMS FROM UNCERTAINTY OVER FUTURE ROLE OF FSTWU, WHETHER IT IS TO HAVE A STRONG VOICE IN LABOR POLICY OR MERELY SERVE AS DEVICE FOR ENFORCING GOVERNMENT POLICY UNILATERALLY ON ALL UNIONS. MITAY APPARENTLY FEELS MORE SECURE AND POWERFUL RIGHT WHERE HE IS AS HEAD OF THE STRONGEST UNION IN THE SUDAN.

5. IN ADDITION TO OPPOSITION FSWTU, RANK AND FILE DISCONTENT OVER RISING PRICES AND SCARCITY OF SOME CONSUMER GOODS IS PROBABLY CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO RECENT UNREST. GOS CONSIDERS PROBLEM SERIOUS AS INDICATED BY ITS CRACK DOWN LAST WEEK ON BLACK MARKETEERS AND HOARDERS AND IT IS ATTEMPTING ENFORCE PRICE CEILINGS. OIL COMPANY REPS SAY RAILWAY SLOWDOWN HAS ALSO REDUCED STOCKS TO DANGEROUSLY LOW LEVELS PRIOR TO WET SEASON WHEN THEY NORMALLY SEEK BUILD AND DISTRIBUTE RESERVES.

6. COMMENT: NIMAIRI' S SCHEDULED ADDRESS TO RAILWAYS UNION CONFERENCE IN ATBARA ON MAY 15 MAY BE NEXT CHAPTER GOS- UNION DIFFICULTIES.
FRITTS

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